

MINUTES OF THE NEW ORLEANS COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMIES - BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Monday, August 27, 2018

4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the New Orleans College Preparatory Academies (“NOCP”) was held at Crocker College Prep, 2301 Marengo Street, New Orleans, LA, 70115 on August 27, 2018.

The following Trustees were present:

Patrick Norton, Chairman
Shaun Rafferty, Vice Chairman
Jim Raby
Grisela Jackson, Treasurer
Murray Pitts
Stephen Boyard
Celeste Eustis, Secretary
Beaux Jones
Julia Walker

The following trustees were not present:

Barbara MacPhee

The following NOCP staff were present:

Joel Castro, CEO
Jonathan Tebeleff, CFO
Darren Lewis – Principal of Cohen College Prep
Kevin Word – Principal of Crocker College Prep
Dr. Mike Vance, Director of Student Services
Sam King, Social Worker at Cohen College Prep
Hillary Hoffer, Director of Development
Tia Bilinsky, Director of Data
Avis Brock, Family Engagement and Student Enrichment Coordinator
Troave’ Profice – Director of Communications
Jeremy Davis – ELA Teacher at Crocker College Prep
Meghan Mekita – CTE Teacher at Cohen College Prep

Also in attendance:

Mr. Robert Morris, Uptown Messenger

I. Call to Order and Agenda Review. The meeting was called to order at 4:31 p.m. by Mr. Norton. The agenda had previously been distributed to the board and posted according to law.

II. Approval of prior minutes. The minutes from the former two board meetings had previously been distributed to the board for review. Ms. Pitts made a motion to approve the minutes from May 21, 2018, Mr. Jones seconded, and the board unanimously approved the minutes from the May board meeting.

Mr. Raby made a motion to approve the minutes from July 16, 2018, Ms. Pitts seconded, and the board unanimously approved the minutes from the July meeting, for which there had not been a quorum present.

III. Announcements and Recognitions

Mr. Castro introduced Cohen Junior Selena Lee and Social Worker, Sam King.

Last year, Ms. King nominated Selena Lee for the 360+ Leadership Collective, which is an organization that fully funds high school students from the US to engage with India through an immersive, international experience that fosters global citizenship.

Selena presented a PowerPoint with photos from her trip, and shared her experience and learnings with the board.

Board members asked Selena questions.

After the presentation, Mr. Castro made announcements. He reminded board members to do the Louisiana ethics training. He will be resending the link after the meeting.

IV. Start of School Reports

Mr. Castro stated that we have had a very successful start of the school year, particularly with the changes that have been implemented by our new principals.

Mr. Lewis provided an update on Cohen's first four weeks of school. Cohen administrators and teachers are focusing on instructional quality. Currently, all teachers are receiving feedback daily to better support instruction. Students are now in the process of diagnostic testing for LEAP 360. This will provide baseline data. Next week, they will gather ACT baseline data for all students.

About 60% of Cohen students are involved in co-curricular activities including clubs, Student Government, sports, and band. The Student Government is working to help build capacity of the school by promoting tutoring sessions. Every Thursday, teachers lead tutoring after school. No sports or band practices happen

during tutoring time. There is a separate tutoring day specific for English Language Learners.

Mr. Word presented about the start of school. Crocker students just finished iSTEOP screening last week. Crocker shifted from using MAP testing to iSTEOP because it utilizes fewer instructional days to gather data and is a Tier I assessment according to the Louisiana Department of Education's curriculum reviews. This week 3rd-8th grade kids are taking LEAP 360 to gather diagnostic data.

On Friday, August 24th there was a staff professional development day focused on behavior management. This focused on maximizing instructional time and keeping students in the classroom.

Ms. Walker asked about the focus on arts and technology. Most teachers have only been teaching for 5 years or less, so the overall focus will be on improving teacher quality first. There are areas for growth in the arts and STEM area once teacher quality and student scores improve.

V. SPS Data Report

Mr. Castro introduced Tia Bilinsky to present on SPS at Cohen and Crocker.

Final SPS data is not available until December, but Ms. Bilinsky prepared projections for the 2017-18 SPS scores, and framed the conversation around historical data based on the prior three school years.

Ms. Bilinsky presented a deep dive of Crocker's three year trends. She explained that comparing year-to-year data is not necessarily consistent. The metrics the state uses have changed and become more rigorous over the years. Projections indicate that Crocker experienced a slight increase in SPS last year, but that they will still likely earn a D rating.

Ms. Pitts, Ms. Eustis, and Mr. Jones asked questions about the Dropout Credit Accumulation Index.

Mr. Davis asked about the maximum score for Dropout Accumulation Index.

Ms. Bilinsky shifted the presentation to focus on Cohen's projected SPS for 2017-18. The metrics the state uses have changed and become more rigorous over the years. Therefore, comparing data between years is not necessarily consistent. Ms. Bilinsky stated that Cohen is forecasted to be in the high-D range for the 2017-18 school year. SPS had one big change last year, as the State Assessment Performance and Progress Index incorporated a growth metric for the first time. This growth metric makes up 12.5% of the SPS score.

Ms. Bilinsky reviewed the other components of high school SPS including, Strength of Diploma, Cohort Graduation Rate Index, ACT, and Progress Points.

Mr. Norton, Ms. Jackson, and Ms. Walker asked clarifying questions about the Cohort Graduation Rate Index.

Mr. Boyard asked a question about strength of diploma. High schools earn 100 points for a diploma (TOPS University or Jumpstart), then additional credentials add points (ie: AP courses, Certifications, etc.)

Ms. Walker asked how EL students factor into SPS. Ms. Bilinsky explained that EL students do not count in SPS for Assessment Index until they have been in the country for three years, which is typically six semesters.

Mr. Boyard asked about the plan for ACT prep. Mr. Lewis discussed the diagnostic that students will take, and said that students will be using Mastery Prep for ACT classes. ACT Boot Camp will also take place on Saturdays.

VI. Cohen Facilities Meeting

Mr. Raby announced that for this section of the meeting he would speak on behalf of the Cohen Alumni Association, as President of the Association, not as a NOCP Board Member.

Mr. Castro referenced earlier conversation that the facilities committee recommended the construction of a new building on Cohen's existing site. He spoke in support of the new building at Cohen. NOCP has seen a three year decline in enrollment. It's important to stabilize enrollment, and the facility can help with enrollment, and to move the needle with academics. RSD has put out an RFP for an 110,000 square foot building for 600 students.

Ms. Eustis clarified that the RFP is a design-build project managed and owned by the RSD. Each proposal will have its own unique design based on the contractor. Ms. Eustis is under the impression that RSD will seek feedback from NOCP's board in the design process.

Ms. Jackson asked about the capacity at Cohen. Currently, over 800 students could attend school in Cohen's building.

Mr. Raby voiced the opposition from the Cohen Alumni Association. He provided some history on Cohen. It is the overwhelming position of the Alumni Association that the existing building should be remodeled instead of rebuilt. The existing building is 150,000 square feet, and the Alumni Association has concerns about reducing the size of the building and green space, while also eliminating the auditorium.

Ms. Pitts asked questions about the supply of students and the ideal size for high schools.

Mr. Raby responded with a letter from Patrick Dobard in 2015 that stated that there were not enough high school seats in Orleans Parish.

Mr. Castro cited research for smaller high schools. Additionally, other schools in the city are in similar situations of under-enrollment and over-building now.

Mr. Raby voiced that the Alumni Association is prepared to do whatever possible to remodel Cohen, not rebuild. The alumni association has given Mr. Raby the authority to move forward with any means necessary to support this position.

Ms. Eustis encouraged the Alumni Association to review the RFP.

Ms. Jackson made the point that it's the NOCP's job to advocate for current and future students, and suggested that we cannot get what we need for our kids if we are on opposite sides.

Ms. Walker asked Mr. Castro to explain the green space. There are currently no plans to eliminate the green space. The first plan reflected the elimination of this space, but has since been modified. There is also a weight room. We would be losing an auditorium along with classrooms.

Mr. Jones asked about the material conditions of the bid.

Mr. Boyard voiced his concern about the lack of an auditorium, and spoke about how a gym or stadium seating is not conducive for all community members. He also spoke about providing cultural events to students in the arts and the importance of the auditorium for student development. He questions the emphasis on gyms, but not on auditoriums. He hopes that someday that it can be incorporated.

Mr. Jones asked what recourse the board has in the facilities decision.

Ms. Eustis proposed that we wait to see the responses from the RFP and then discuss as a board at a later date. This project is managed by RSD, and the NOCP board does not have authority to vote on the matter.

VII. Finance Committee

Mr. Tebeleff handed out the 2018-19 budget and the end of year financials for 2017-18 including the income statement and balance sheet.

NOCP ended the 2017-18 year with approximately at \$100K deficit, which was lower than previously forecasted. We received more funding for students with high-cost services this year, and this was almost fully funded. However, we were over budget in a few areas including: busing (3 additional buses), custodians that were contracted, repairs and maintenance, and long-term substitutes. This leaves the fund balance just over \$1,000,000, at about 6%.

Ms. Jackson made a motion to accept the 2017-18 financial statements as presented, Ms. Walker seconded,

and the board unanimously approved the motion.

Mr. Tebeleff shared some of the iterations that the budget has gone through to get to this point. This version demonstrates Cohen's enrollment at 370.

Mr. Boyard asked about major services being lost.

Ms. Pitts asked about any financial implications or changes under OPSB verses RSD. Mr. Tebeleff said there were no major changes. However, Mr. Tebeleff has been involved in conversations and partnered closely with OPSB during the transition.

Ms. Walker asked about enrollment at Hoffman. There is a wait list currently for infants, 1s and 2s. Mr. Jones commented that he thinks that there is room to increase private fundraising for Hoffman.

Ms. Jackson made the motion to accept the 2018-19 budget, Ms. Eustis seconded the motion, and the board unanimously approved the 2018-19 budget as presented.

VIII. Public Comment.

Mr. Norton asked for Public Comments.

Ms. Mekita voiced a statement on behalf of teachers and students. While in favor of an auditorium, she believes that having windows in classrooms and a functioning AC system is more important to learning and overall wellbeing. She was in favor of a new building.

Mr. Raby made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Pitts seconded, and the board unanimously approved the motion. The meeting ended at 6:42pm.

Celeste Eustis, Secretary